

Message Text

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R 150030Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7061
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
ALL OTHER AMCONSULS IN CANADA POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF THE CANADIAN LABOR CONGRESS CONVENTION-
THIRD AND FINAL REPORT

REF: QUEBEC 107 AND 113

1. SUMMARY. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CANADIAN LABOR CONGRESS SKILLFULLY AVOIDED DIVISION OVER THE QUEBEC SEPARATISM ISSUE AND MANEUVERED THE CONVENTION INTO A POSTURE OF UNIFIED SUPPORT OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY. PROPOSALS FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES WERE DEFEATED. MOST OF THE INCUMBENT OFFICERS AND THEIR NEW PRESIDENT RECEIVED SOLID SUPPORT FROM WHAT CAN ONLY BE CALLED A RANK-AND-FILE TRADE UNION CONVENTION. THE TRUDEAU ADMINISTRATION WAS CRITICIZED FOR ITS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES AND THE DELEGATES ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY VOTED THAT THEIR LEADERS SEEK ITS OUSTER. ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE DELEGATES WORKED TOGETHER IN A HARMONIOUS AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE. END SUMMARY.

2. ONCE THE NEW PRESIDENT, DENNIS MCDERMOTT, AND NINETEEN
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OTHER CANADIAN LABOR CONGRESS (CLC) OFFICERS HAD BEEN ELECTED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH, THE 2,462 DELEGATES SETTLED DOWN TO THE TASK OF DISCUSSING AND VOTING ON THE REMAINDER OF THE 240 RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED BY AFFILIATED UNIONS. MOST REMARKABLE WAS THE ATMOSPHERE OF FRIENDLINESS BETWEEN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE DELEGATES EVEN AFTER A SNAPPY REPARTEE BETWEEN JEAN CLAUDE PARROT, LEFTWING

LEADER OF THE INSIDE POSTAL WORKERS (CUPW), AND JOE MORRIS, PRESIDING CHAIRMAN OF THE PLENARY. SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR, PARROT THEATRICALY ACCUSED MORRIS OF TELLING THE PRESS THAT PARROT AND HIS OFFICERS WERE ALL COMMUNISTS, MAOISTS, AND TROTSKYITES. MORRIS DENIED THE ATTACK AND AFTER A BITTER EXCHANGE SHUT OFF PARROT'S MICROPHONE. IN SPITE OF THIS TIFF THE DELEGATES OVERWHELMINGLY VOTED TO SUPPORT CUPW'S CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGING THE POSTAL SERVICE TO A CROWN CORPORATION.

3. THE FRIENDLINESS AND UNIFIED ACTION OF ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE DELEGATES WAS ALMOST MATCHED BY THE ONENESS OF PURPOSE TOWARD THE BUILDING OF A LABOR PARTY, THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP), AND OUSTING THE LIBERALS FROM OFFICE. A GLIMPSE OF NDP POLITICAL STRATEGY CAME FROM ED BROADBENT WHEN HE URGED THE DELEGATES NOT TO SLIDE OVER TO THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE LIBERALS, SUGGESTING SOME NDP OPTIMISM OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF THE EMERGENCE OF A MINORITY GOVERNMENT FROM THE COMING FEDERAL ELECTION IN WHICH THE NDP WOULD SHARE POLITICAL POWER AS THE JUNIOR PARTNER IN A COALITION.

4. MOTIONS WERE PASSED, IN ADDITION TO THOSE MENTIONED IN REFTELS, FAVORING A SHORTER WORK WEEK; INCOME TAX REFORM; PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC UTILITIES, NATURAL ENERGY SOURCES AND THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. COMBINED MOTIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIRECTED AT EASING UNEMPLOYMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, AS DID MOTIONS ON GATT AGAINST REDUCTION OF CUSTOMS RATES ON CLOTHING IMPORTS AND A FIVE-YEAR IMPORT CONTROL LEVEL NOT TO EXCEED 25 PERCENT OF THE CANADIAN CLOTHING MARKET. ONE MOTION ON THE REVISION OF THE AUTO PACT ASKED FOR A BETTER SHARE OF PARTS MANUFACTURING PLANTS. ANOTHER SUBMITTED BY THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY CLERKS ASKED THAT UNITED PARCELS COMPANY NOT BE LICENSED TO OPERATE IN CANADA. FORTY-SIX RESOLUTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA, CONDEMNATION OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT, BANNING OF THE NEUTRON BOMB, CALLING OF A UN WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, REDUCTION IN CANADA'S ARMS EXPENDITURES, DISSOLVING OF NATO, URGING CANADA TO PULL-OUT OF NORAD, INCREASING FOREIGN AID, OPPOSING MULTI-NATIONALS, INCREASING FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF ILO, AND OTHERS, WERE COMBINED INTO A COMMITTEE REPORT THAT IN TURN WAS ACCEPTED AND MOVED BY THE DELEGATES. NUMEROUS OTHER MOTIONS WERE REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR ACTION AS THE CONVENTION ADJOURNED.

5. SIDELIGHTS OF THE CONVENTION INCLUDED INNOCUOUS SPEECHES BY JACOB COHEN, PRESIDENT OF THE ISRAEL LABOR PARTY; OTTO

KERSTEN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS; AND FRANCIS BLANCHARD, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ILO. NEITHER JOHN MUNRO, MINISTER OF LABOR, NOR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION.

6. INCUMBENTS DONALD MONTGOMERY, SECRETARY TREASURER; SHIRLEY CARR AND JULIEN MAJOR, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENTS; WERE RE-ELECTED. MONTGOMERY OVERWHELMINGLY DEFEATED HOMER STEVENS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA UNITED FISHERMEN AND ALLIED

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WORKERS UNION. CARR AND MAJOR RAN UNOPPOSED.

7. COMMENT: DENNIS MCDERMOTT CAN BE EXPECTED TO REVITALIZE THE CLC ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL BRING THE CLC INTO A FORMAL TRI-PARTITE ARRANGEMENT THAT WOULD INCLUDE GOVERNMENT, LABOR AND MANAGEMENT. THE RANK AND FILE DELEGATES CONSISTENTLY VOICED THEIR DISAPPROVAL OF SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE CONVENTION. MCDERMOTT, HOWEVER, MADE IT CLEAR IN HIS COMMENTS TO THE MEDIA DURING THE CONVENTION THAT HE WOULD SEEK DIALOGUE WITH THE LEADERS OF ANY GOVERNMENT IN POWER FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING LABOR'S INTEREST IN THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY. AS FOR MANAGEMENT, MCDERMOTT CLAIMS NOT TO BE A DOGMATIC SOCIALIST AND WILL LEAVE HIS OPTIONS OPEN WITH REGARD TO SUPPORTING OR NOT SUPPORTING THE NATIONALIZATION OF SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES. HIS OPINION OF MARXIST DOGMATISM MIGHT HAVE BEEN BEST REVEALED WHEN HE ANSWERED A REPORTER'S QUESTION ON HOW HE WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE THE

NUMBER OF MARXISTS IN THE AUDIENCE. HIS ANSWER, "FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF THE PODIUM I CAN LOOK OUT AND COUNT ALL THEIR LITTLE POINTY HEADS." THIS IS NOT TO IMPLY THAT MCDERMOTT WILL NOT STRIVE FOR CENTRALIZATION OF POWER WITH-
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IN THE CLC NOR DOES IT IMPLY THAT HIS LEADERSHIP WILL BE MODERATE. QUITE THE OPPOSITE. HE WILL MOVE THE CLC TOWARD PEACEFUL MILITANCY LENDING NATIONAL SUPPORT TO STRIKES, NATIONAL OPPOSITION TO PLANT LAYOFFS AND CLOSURES, AND PERHAPS ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS.

8. THE CLC DOES NOT DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, EXCEPT FOR A FEW DIRECTLY AFFILIATED UNIONS. THEREFORE, THE MCDERMOTT LEADERSHIP WILL NOT AFFECT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TRENDS AS UNIONS BECOME DISENGAGED FROM ANTI-INFLATION BOARD CONTROLS BEGINNING APRIL 14, 1978. HE WILL, HOWEVER, STRONGLY OPPOSE MOVES BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MANIPULATE CONTROLS ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR NOW BEING CONTEMPLATED BY PARLIAMENT AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF RELATIONS ACT. HIS OPPOSITION AT THIS LATE STAGE CAN ONLY BE VOCAL WITH LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

9. THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS REPORT INCLUDED THE COMMUNIST PARTY LINE SUBMISSIONS FROM SEVERAL MARXIST-LED LOCAL UNIONS OF THE FISHERMEN'S UNION OF B.C., UNITED ELECTRICAL WORKERS, SHIPYARD WORKERS B.C., CARPENTERS UNION B.C., WOODWORKERS OF B.C., OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL WORKERS, AND A FEW LOCALS OF THE STEELWORKERS AND THE UNITED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS. THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CLC BELIEVED IT "NECESSARY TO WATERDOWN AND INCLUDE SOME OF THE CONTENT OF THESE RESOLUTIONS" IN ITS COMBINED RESOLUTION REPORT, AN INDICATION OF THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE CLC TO TAKE A PRECISE STAND ON THE POLITICAL MANEUVERING OF SOME OF ITS AFFILIATES.

10. NOTE: THE EUR LABOR ADVISOR MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE AND REFTELS TO LONDON, BRUSSELS AND GENEVA, AND
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TO PASS ON ITS CONTENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE AFL-CIO. ENDERS

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